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The Great Deluge and Its Coming

Once, in the flooding mayhem, I came face-to-face
with a blue-faced mandrill

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and his fear-whitened eyes. Once a spotted bat grasped
 my collar, hung there until I was hit by a wave
 and wrenched away clinging upside
 down to a mule braying its harsh treble.

For a distance a dog, a dingo, held on
 by her teeth clamped to the belt
 at my waist. I circled her mangy head
 with one arm, clung with the other
 to the bulk of a musk ox
 pitching past
 in the swell. Seeds and nuts and the roots
 of tundra grasses were matted in his long
 hanging fur, among which roots crouched
 numerous mice harboring nits and fleas
 and wingless flies.

 We were mewling
 and choking, spitting
 and barking in our plight, the bundle
 of us in a jumble, struggling, shifting constantly, losing hold
 in white water, breaking apart,

 carried away, found again. We were
 knocked and shaken, buffeted against rocks,
 engulfed flailing,
 swung into shore by the current and jerked out
 to mid-torrent again by the same.
 Direction was destiny.

But were those really white wings spread wide,
 gliding silently over us
 all the way in the tumult?
 Or was it simply a deeper heaven of moonlit clouds calm

in a certain prophecy
that hovered above us through the night?
Or was it the ultimate stillness of the dependable void
that kept us comforted
until we were brought, finally floating
slowly together, almost sleeping,
into a growing light burning and blinding
like the conflagration of dawn over an open sea?